

Remarks

Entry of this Amendment is requested under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 in that it cancels claims and meets requirements of form made in the previous Office Action. Upon entry of this Amendment, cancelled claims will be 1-10, 19 & 22. Re-examination and reconsideration are requested.

The courtesies extended by the Examiner during the Interview of July 6, 2004 are acknowledged and appreciated.

In compliance with paragraph 1 of the Office Action, the non-elected claims have been cancelled.

The “vinyl” limitation has been deleted from claim 11.

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 11-18 & 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, § 1. Support for the substrate being flexible appears in the Specification at 6:28 (“semi-rigid plastic”). The “semi-” qualifier connotes a deviation from rigidity which is embraced by the limitation “flexible”, as applied in claim 11 to the “substrate” element. Additionally, the Specification calls for “at least a semi-rigid plastic material”. The “at least” qualifier is applied to the phrase “semi-rigid”. Thus, to one of skill in the art, the term “at least” would connote a plastic material which retains some flexibility.

Claim 1 calls for the insert panel to have “a characterizing topography having a finish selected from the group consisting of a metallic, and a wood grain-like finish that is visible through the opening of the substrate.” Support lies in the Specification at 6:4-5.

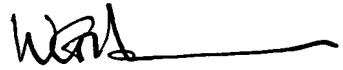
In contrast, the '511 reference calls for a “covering 6 . . . [which comprises] a layer of soft material, such as wadding or the like, to which is heat-welded a layer of natural or synthetic fabric . . .” Thus, the '511 Patent fails to disclose the invention as claimed.

Additionally, the approach disclosed by the '511 reference teaches away from the invention as claimed in that it entails at least one additional manufacturing step (heat welding a layer of fabric).

If further discussion would be helpful in expediting matters, the Examiner is asked to contact the undersigned. Otherwise, a Notice of Allowability is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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